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# The Girl with Seven Faces



forest

fairytale

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## Chapter 1 by The Ginger

The forest was a graveyard. The trees -- grey corpses with fractured limbs -- were always silent.

Their branches never rustled in the wind.

Their decaying leaves never even thought of making a defiant sound.

Setting foot into the forest was like sinking into an air-tight coffin. It was quiet - too quiet for the living. The silence stuck to your skin like boils and choked the courage out of any traveler brave enough - or foolish enough - to venture more than a few feet into its wooded depths.

"There's something not quite right about that place," the villagers whispered to each other at that late hour in the night when reason when to bed and fear rolled out from under its quilted blankets.

"Don't go in there," they would advise any peddler who wandered into the little town, eager to make a few coins. If the ignorant peddler needed more explanation than that, they would simply say. "That forest is...too quiet."

And they were right.

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The forest was too quiet.

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At least, it usually was. But tonight, tonight was different.

Tonight, the trees were not silent.

Tonight, they whispered. They gathered in groups and gossiped about the news, their branches quivering in curiosity.

The wind, normally too afraid to enter into the woods, had the gall to enter in on this night. He danced through the broken tree limbs and suddenly the forest was alive. The rustling leaves were a faint heartbeat.

"There's a girl," a fossilized Birch breathed to his Oaken neighbor. "There's a girl in the wood, and she has the chest."

## Chapter 2 by JM



Nora's bare feet strained to gain a hold on the muddy ground as she tried to gather the strength to pull the chest over a cluster of knotted roots. It wasn't very large--less than a quarter of her own size--but it had to be twice her weight, and her arms quivered with over-exertion.

With every breath, she considered leaving the chest where it was and returning home. The forest was growing louder now, and angrier, and she had no doubt that she was the one who woke them from their ancient slumber. But she couldn't return home empty-handed. Whatever was inside the chest--gold, jewels, artefacts, lost tomes, magic--her family was depending on her to bring it back.

"Come on," she said, grunting, as she finally lifted the chest over the largest of the roots. "Just a little further..."

"No," came a voice from behind her. "You stop here."

## Chapter 3 by Shadowdancer



Suddenly, in the all too quiet forest, the wind gusted through, and behind Nora was a figure in a

black cloak, blowing wildly in the wind. Nora dropped the chest on the ground as she gasped at its appearance, and all of a sudden she felt a heavy weight on her back again. She shook in fear, and tried to decide what to do. Could she climb the trees and away from it? But the trees were alive, as their whispers told

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She watched as the figure walk towards her the black cloak tumbling on the dead leaves and sticks. She took a step backwards, looking at the chest, plated in gold and silver next to her, but when she looked back the figure was right in front of her face, emptiness under the hood.

"Leave it here." The figure said.

"I need to bring...." She shuddered, feeling shivers down her spine.

"It is not worth it, girl. Never worth it."

"My family...."

"Do you want to become like me then?"

It reached out its hand to her face from under the cloak, but it wasn't a hand anymore. It was a skeleton, covered in decay, and she tripped backwards over a root to get away from it.

She scooted backwards in fright, expecting it to reach out to her again but the hand stopped, a point made, and then disappeared it back in the black cloak.

"Leave it here. You will be spared." The figure's voice was softer now, kinder, full of sadness.

"My family needs it. I have to bring it back." Nora said, looking up at the figure in the black cloak looming a few feet away from her.

"Your last name is Mark, right?"

"Uh, yeah. Nora Mark."

"Even more so, leave the chest here."

"Uh, why?"

The figure took a step forward, and Nora instinctively got up, wiping off the leaves from her dress.

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The figure looked at her, but she didn't look away. It was slightly hunched, it felt like it was looking at her chest.

"Your grandmother is a witch. She will turn all of us into monsters like me."

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